

Open Space Preservation

Local environmental commissions work to protect open space. They create inventories of local public and private open space and make recommendations for their use. Commissions work with local open space committees, land trusts and environmental organizations, elected officials, planning boards and citizens to protect important natural resources through acquisition, Master Plans, and local ordinances.

Effective open space protection takes a combination of planning, regulation and acquisition.

Planning - *Identify important natural resources, preserved lands, and linkages*

- Use the town's [Environmental/Natural Resource Inventory](#) (ERI) to identify and local existing preserved lands and important areas for future preservation
- Inform citizens and local officials of benefits of [open space preservation](#)
- Develop an [Open Space Plan](#) and [Farmland Preservation Plan](#) guidelines for municipal farmland preservation plans to help your town qualify for planning incentive financing from [Green Acres](#) and the [State Agriculture Development Committee](#)

Regulation- *Use local ordinances and state laws to protect important natural resources and lands that surround preserved areas*

- Help develop and convince governing body to enact [ordinances](#) to protect specific resources like steep slopes, stream corridors
- Persuade the Planning Board to require conservation easements on wetlands, stream corridors and other important resources as conditions of approval for subdivisions and site plans
- Inventory, monitor and enforce existing conservation easements
- Monitor the local [Recreation and Open Space Inventory](#) (ROSI) which Green Acres requires for its grants and loans to insure that preserved land is not used in an unauthorized manner

Acquisition - *Obtain land through purchase, "bargain sale" (at less than appraised value) or donation; include purchase of full title, development rights and/or conservation easement*

- Work with local officials and fellow citizens to pass a referendum to establish a local Open Space Tax dedicated to land acquisition. [ANJEC's Handbook for Public Financing of Open Space in NJ](#), available online or for purchase, includes state enabling legislation for local open space taxes, summaries of financing approaches and ways to build voters' support.
- Organize and serve on your local township Open Space Committee
- Work with local officials, local and statewide land trusts to develop applications to [Green Acres](#), [Garden State Preservation Trust](#) and [State Agriculture Development Committee](#).